

EXHIBITION MUSEU PUGET

Temporary exhibitions Ground floor.

Uns dies del 1953 a Eivissa i Formentera. Monica Craig. Fotografia

[Some days back in 1953, at Ibiza and Formentera. Monica Craig. Photography]

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Photography]

In the summer of 2023, we received an envelope sent from England by Trevor Mulford and addressed to the Museu d'Art Contemporany d'Eivissa [Ibiza Museum of Contemporary Art]. It contained a letter with fifty photographs taken in Ibiza by his niece Monica Craig in 1953, mostly in black and white (42) with a few in colour (8). The envelope also contained three postcards of Ibiza and one of Majorca, along with a further two photographs of a possible building in construction from an unknown location in England.

We attempted to contact Mr Mulford, to thank him for his donation and requesting more information about his niece, however he failed to respond. The museum formally accepted the legacy, deeming it to be of considerable artistic and documental value; there was something about these photographs, aside from providing pictorial information of the period, that conveyed a sense of the photographer's artistic eye. In his letter, Mr Mulford told us that Monica Craig had died in 2000, and was buried in Old Basing cemetery, near Basingstoke in Hampshire, southeast of London. We wondered, whether he had been going through her papers, some years after her death, which had prompted him to make this gesture to the MACE? Whatever the reason, the fact was that these photographs, taken in Ibiza, were finally returning to Ibiza.

Fortunately, Old Basing cemetery provides a digital service locating the graves and names of the deceased buried there, and so we were able to learn that the photographer's full name was Monica Eileen Craig, born on April 12th 1925, who died on November 30th 2000. Alongside her were buried, Alan Charles Craig, born on October 4th 1898, who died on October 23rd 1970, and her mother Ivy Georgina Violet Craig; née Dockery, born on April 29th 1901 and who died on February 22nd 1988. In his letter, Trevor Mulford wrote that the photographs had been taken on a visit by Monica and her mother to the island in 1953, when they stayed at Villa Clara and in fact, two of these were taken at that house, with the city of Ibiza as a backdrop. In the foreground is a staircase lined with plant pots leading to what appeared to be a modern villa. By studying the construction, we were able to ascertain that the house was located to the east of Talamanca bay. Furthermore, on the back of the photographs someone had written in pencil: "View from Villa Clara" and "View from Villa Clara across Ibiza Harbour". After careful scrutiny of the images we realised that it was in fact a single view split into two, so that when we joined the two images, we were able to appreciate the full splendour of the bay, with the city of Ibiza and the port in the background. Monica's intention was to take a panoramic view and she must have been attempting to take a view at a considerable angle, and finding it impossible, with her excellent photographer's eye she carefully calculated how to take the snaps to make the full view possible.

By analysing the photographs, we were able to reconstruct the routes that Monica and her mother took in Ibiza. As such, they visited the city, its outskirts, Formentera, Sant Jordi, Sant Antoni, Santa Eulària and Ses Salines. And our route begins with them.

One photograph shows us Ivy, strolling through the countryside in the neighbourhood of Santa Eulalia. She wore her hair short and was dressed in a light, printed frock. The scene depicts an almond tree in leaf to her right and a thicket of faded thistles. In the background, the

borders between the different plots are clearly defined along with the terraces and farmsteads dotted here and there. Judging by the landscape it seems to be summer.

The locations are written on the back of the copies which helped us to follow in her footsteps. There are several snapshots of a day trip to Santa Eulària and Puig de Missa with its archways and domed cupolas and one of a whitewashed crucifix of a station of the cross.

She was clearly interested in the workers at Las Salinas as she photographs them seven times and a typewritten note has been attached to the back of one photo but it has been torn so we are only able to read a part::

"Las Salinas Brightly checked shirts and faded blue denims are good enough to wear for work on the salt pans, but each man takes special...with footwear..." It might have been in September. The salt pans can be seen overflowing with salt. The photographs also show a team of men collecting and loading salt onto the wagons of the small train that facilitated the task of transporting it to the storage depot. In some they can be seen posing for the camera, smiling and wearing caps, berets or straw hats to protect their heads. In others they can be seen in action shovelling the salt with their spades. One photograph shows the piles of "senalles d'espart" – raffia baskets battered by use.

During their walks through the city they stopped in the port, drawn perhaps by the boats anchored there and the mirror-like surface of the water. One snapshot depicts a fishing boat at anchor with its name painted on the starboard side, "Virgin of Fatima" and several "llaüts" with their sails furled. She also snapped a very traditional scene which may be Puget Viñas with a group of men standing around a fisherman who sits on the edge of the quay, a woman in black has stopped to greet the man or to walk with him, while two lads look at the fisherman's group but they pass by... and on the ground the nets are spread to dry and the "cistelles de palangre" are ranged in perfect order. Another snap shows a scene where boxes of fish are being unloaded

They also stroll around the streets of Dalt Vila: with a view of the Vila square taken from es Piló at the moment that a group of mounted horsemen descend. There is another taken from a private house close to the cathedral square, providing a panoramic view of the rooftops cascading downwards, the fort of Santa Lucia, and the bays of Ibiza and Talamanca. As she passed through Ses Taules gateway she took a photograph from behind of a group of three priests in their soutanes and shovel hats, and she took advantage to portray the junction of carrer Antoni Palau with Mercat Vell, which at that time of day was thronged with people with their baskets and bicycles. Reaching the Plaza de Sa Tertulia, she continued to snap with her camera this time focussing on the view before her with the profile of the Cafe La Estrella and its distinctive pergola on the left.

On the way to Formentera she photographed two views of the old city from the stern of the boat as it pulls out of the port, capturing both sides of the neighbourhoods within the city walls and outside; providing an intimate portrait of a city with a timeless profile that has remained unaltered for centuries.

There is a lovely sequence of three photographs of the "Manolito". This "barca de bou" had been built in Gijón in 1925 and at first it was used as a fishing boat. In 1950 it was acquired by Juan Ferrer Castelló to ferry the line between the two islands transporting passengers and cargo. It ended its days in 1960 when it was wrecked off the coast of Espalmador as it passed by Es Freus, luckily without mishap or victims thanks to the captain's expertise. (Diario de Ibiza / March 4th 2012 / Miguel Ángel González and Diario de Ibiza / October 24th 2010 / Carmelo Convalía)

At the edge of the La Savina quay, there is a view of a small bus popularly called sa parrala d'en Paya, with people getting out, or waiting to embark, one man with a checked shirt is recognisable from photos of both the port and the village, as well as a woman with a spotted and striped scarf, and there is also a Guardia Civil Officer who is speaking to

a man, another with a bicycle and his “senalló”, and yet another with rolled up cable coils on his arm. The hustle and bustle of daily life. She may have spent some days in Formentera because there are several photographs of the island, including the fishermen’s huts at Es Pujols, a huge juniper tree branch from which dangle fish hung out to dry (sa parrera de peix sec) and a view of the waves breaking on the rocky shore with the Roca Bella hotel in the background.

She visited Sant Jordi, as there are three photographs of the outside of its crenellated church. There is also a photograph of the isolated ruined mill of Puig den Valls. In one place that has not been located, she found a woman washing wool which she snapped twice, noting briefly on the back of the photographs: “cleaning wool” / “wool drying” / “farm in the island interior”. She visited Sant Antoni, there are 3 photographs in colour of the port and the church. And she also bought 3 postcards of Domingo Viñets.

Possibly towards the end of their stay, Ivy and Monica Craig took the boat to Majorca in route to Barcelona and London, as there is a single somewhat melancholic postcard of the patio in the hotel Miramar at Puerto Pollensa. They returned to Old Basing or Basingstoke, or perhaps some other town in Hampshire, laden with memories and photographs to be developed. Today, thanks to Trevor Mulford's decision to stuff these photographs into an envelope and post them to the Ibiza Museum of Contemporary Art (MACE), we have been provided with a glimpse of this trip, ensuring that that memory would not be lost to the oblivion of a private collection but instead would sow the seed of that memory in all of us and keep it alive.

Elena Ruiz

MACE Director